

MINUTES

B – PUBLIC

**Shetland Islands Council
Main Hall, Town Hall, Lerwick, and remotely via Teams
Wednesday 2 July 2020 at 10.00am**

Present (Main Hall):

M Bell	S Coutts
S Flaws	J Fraser
A Hawick	C Hughson
S Leask	M Lyall
E Macdonald	R McGregor
A Manson	D Sandison
I Scott	C Smith
G Smith	R Thomson

Present (by remote link):

D Anderson	P Campbell
A Cooper	A Duncan
T Smith	

Apologies:

A Priest

In Attendance (Officers) (Main Hall):

M Sandison, Chief Executive

In Attendance (Officers) (by remote link):

H Budge, Director of Children's Services
C Ferguson, Director of Corporate Services
N Grant, Director of Development Services
D Bell, Executive Manager – Human Resources
T Coutts, Acting Executive Manager – Economic Development
J Manson, Executive Manager – Finance Services
P Peterson, Executive Manager – Executive Services
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
R Sinclair, Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement
A Cogle, Team Leader – Administration
K Johnston, Team Leader - Legal
B Kerr, Communications Officer
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Chairperson

Mr Bell, Convener of the Council, presided.

Circular

The Convener advised that he had sought prior agreement from Members attending regarding the meeting being recorded. The first and main purpose of this was for the drafting of the minute in the event that the Committee Officer, attending remotely, lost the connection at any point. Secondly the recording would provide officers with an opportunity to consult and explore

the practical and technical requirements for publication of meeting recordings. He went on to advise that in the event of any votes required, voting would be done by roll call.

The circular calling the meeting was then held as read, noting in particular that the public were excluded from the meeting in terms of Section 50(A)(3A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as introduced by Schedule 6, Paragraph 13 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020.

The Convener advised that whilst the public were excluded, and as the technical requirements to make meetings more accessible to the general public had not yet been put in place, he had given consent for members of the local media to be present in a room at 8 North Ness to view the proceedings via remote link accompanied by the Council's Communications Officer. This maintained a level of public accountability and scrutiny to the proceedings and the formal decisions of the Council would, as per usual practice, be available to the public after the meeting on the Council's website.

Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 5: Support for Inshore Fisheries Management – Shetland Islands Regulated Fishery (Scotland) Order 2020/21

Mr Sandison declared an interest in the above item as an independent member of the North Atlantic Fisheries College Board.

Ms Macdonald declared an interest in the above item as a family member was involved.

(Mr Anderson joined the meeting)

38/20 Chief Executive Report

The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive (CE-01-20-F) providing an update on COVID response work, and setting out the strategic thinking underpinning the Recovery and Renewal Framework which would ensure a co-ordinated response to maximise the impact of collective resources.

The Chief Executive summarised the main terms of the report, outlining each of the Work Strands that would be undertaken during the different phases of the framework. It was expected that the period of significant change that the Council had been through would continue, and the recovery and renewal response would be a collaborative process, with the draft framework being shared widely. It was appropriate that the emergency response to the pandemic was led by public health at the NHS and the Council's role was to support this response - aiding agencies with its resources, supporting the most vulnerable, and managing the economic and social impacts of the lockdown. A range of actions had already been undertaken to provide support to the community. As an incident management phase came to an end, the Council would lead the recovery phase. This emergency was different because there would still need to be an ongoing response efforts that would focus on containing the transmission of the virus and managing the impact on the most vulnerable, even with the move into economic and social recovery. All phases of response, recovery and renewal would run concurrently. Community impact assessments would be carried out into the impact on people, the economy, and infrastructure, and different scenarios would be considered to understand how the impacts would be felt over a 15- 20 year period. Whilst there was a need to understand and respond to local impacts, this was a pandemic and there would be learning and research at local, national and international scale which Shetland would need to feed into and learn from.

It was vital that Shetland continued to make its voice heard, and that the island context continued to be taken into account nationally. The Council had been actively working on delivering the economic support packages, having provided over £7.8M in grant assistance to businesses. Each service was planning service delivery models for recovery, using the road map that the Scottish Government had provided. Service recovery would focus on building back better services, building more resilience into these services, and addressing the weaknesses and inequalities demonstrated through the response phase. Rather than going back to 'normal', the Council would move forward to better services which were more 'shockproof'. The Council planning would take into account the work on the four strands of sustainability - community, environmental, workforce and financial, as detailed in the Council budget papers. It was recognised that a longer term view was required, while keeping the focus on the wellbeing of the community, staff and the environment. Services would be reinstated with greater resilience and promotion of self-service - reduced face-to-face interactions and shielding would be likely to continue for some time. Recovery would be gradual following the global economic downturn, the drop in GDP, and the increase in unemployment. The ability to influence change may be limited as the levers for recovery and economic stimulus were held by UK and Scottish Government, but the Council would ensure that Shetland's influence was felt at a national level. This had been effective when the Leader and Chair of Development had fed back issues on the business support schemes, and seen changes made to make them effective and address gaps in support. The Shetland Energy Hub Project was part of the 10-year plan to reset the demographic challenges and grow the working age population whilst responding to the net zero shift for oil and gas industry. Promote Shetland was also critical to build on the massive increase in interest lately in relocation to Shetland, as more people worked from home and travel to offices was maybe less important. The inequality of the COVID-19 response had been apparent and although all the impacts were not yet known, the elderly had been most impacted by the virus and young people had been most impacted by the lockdown response.

She went on to say that the Council's financial position had changed since the budget had been approved in January. While it had been challenging before, it was now going to be exacerbated by the demand on services. There had been an increase in costs of £2.4million on the planned budget, although there had been some savings in fuel and energy costs which would disappear as services were reinstated. The cost of education recovery would be £8million, if the contingency plan had to be delivered, and moving services back into operation had a cost. The COVID-19 response would also impact on the Council's future financial resources, particularly in relation to investments and the ability to plan services into the future due to changing levels of public sector funding. The change in oil and gas prices would have an impact on the future of Sullom Voe Terminal, which again impacted on the Council's income. It would be vital to access all funding opportunities, especially around the green economy, to restart the economy. Staff had also been impacted, and consideration would have to be given to how to best support staff and provide the workforce with the best environment to support them to do their work in a period of dramatic change. It was recognised that Shetland's natural and built environment had created opportunities in terms of community and individual wellbeing. As ways of working and travelling had changed, consideration would have to be given to finding the right balance in moving employees back to workplaces. It was important to secure funding to address the weaknesses that had been apparent in terms of connectivity, and to use all investment levers - such as the Island Deal, Housing Investment Plan, climate change funds, Crown Estate Income -

in order to implement the economic recovery required. There were a number of economic stimulus projects planned in Shetland which would all play their part in supporting the economic and community recovery.

The Chief Executive and Director of Development Services then responded to questions, and the Council noted the following:

- The Scottish Government had commissioned work to consider inequalities and an assessment of the impact of the pandemic response. This information would be circulated to members when the assessment was completed.
- Arrangements in place regarding the use of the Anderson High School Halls of Residence by NHS staff had been agreed some months ago, and the details would be circulated to Members.
- The majority of cruise ship visits to Shetland came under the remit of Lerwick Port Authority (LPA), though there had been none to date as the cruise market had been severely affected by COVID-19. LPA would engage with the emergency planning and resilience forum when considering future visits, and would take advice from the relevant public health and maritime health authorities. The longer term impact of this downturn in cruise ship visits was not yet known.
- The creation of a new college in Shetland would contribute to Shetland's recovery and renewal, so should also be included in the list of economic stimulus projects referred to in paragraph 4.20 of the report. An employability sub-group had been set up, and it would be considering reskilling, the opportunities for people to change career, and the changing employment needs in the community.
- The reference to "four lenses of sustainability" referred to the four sustainability themes the Council used in setting its budget and it was intended that these themes would overlay everything that was being carried out at the moment, and be considered in all decisions about future priorities for change.
- The reduction in travel currently being experienced would not be used to determine service level assumptions in the future. However consideration would be given to how to sustain and improve connectivity so that people did not need to commute as much. Services could maybe sustained at a lower level if digital connectivity was improved, and people's work/life balances and the cost of living would be improved if they were not travelling as often.
- The Scottish Government did recognise that COVID-19 was having different impacts in different communities. It was expected that there may be more localised decision-making in responses to outbreaks as things moved forward.
- The Council values were on display throughout the response phase, and it was important to continue to create an environment where individuals continued to take personal responsibility. This had been demonstrated through the responses to our learning on the incident response so far.
- Engagement took place with all staff weekly, and appreciation of their efforts was always expressed. The Convener and Leader had also sent messages to all staff. Staff surveys had highlighted that there was not enough thanks and praise, so it was important not to overlook the value of direct thanks to staff, and a staff

recognition event had taken place for the last few years. Research has illustrated that a financial reward did not connect people to their organisation in the way that personal recognition did, and the Council was committed to personal recognition in this way.

- Partner agencies and the third sector assisted in providing support to frontline staff, and it was important to continue to use existing assets to support the response. There were currently opportunities for the third sector to apply for government funds.
- The Council had previously commissioned an input and output study which gave a good baseline in terms of GDP and levels of unemployment locally, and Economic Development had been asked to get an assessment of the current situation in finalising that study. It was recognised that there would be changes to the Government's furlough scheme and other milestones that would trigger further changes in the economy, so it was something that would have to be revisited regularly over the next few months. Skills Development Scotland was also collating and sharing information regarding employment, and this would be used for the evidence base. Figures collated regarding economic impacts were national figures, so it would be a bit more difficult to get these at a local level.
- Advice had been provided to staff in relation to home working and how to claim from HMRC allowances in relation to additional costs as a result of working from home.
- The shift to electric vehicles were a key strand in the recovery plan, both locally and nationally. The Council would be ensuring it accessed funding available for charging points, as it had done for a number of years.
- There had been discussions around renewables, and the report presented to Members regarding the Energy Hub had addressed many issues, including ongoing engagement around community energy networks.
- It was recognised that there was a need to reconsider the size of the Council's estate given the increase in the number of people working from home, and the need to meet social distancing requirements in the workplace. It was recognised that there was a need to adapt to flexible workspaces, and joint work was also taking place with the NHS. There was a real opportunity to rationalise and provide different accommodation, and to consider what staff would require in future as there may be a longer term shift in working practices.
- Work had commenced on community impact assessments, and the Shetland Planning Partnership was starting to get data on outcomes and indicators. The work to date could be circulated to Members. The working group looking at employment referred to earlier was an example of what had been done to respond to the initial assessments. If the data illustrated something required to be done in terms of responding to a community impact, this would be relayed to Members and it would become a priority in the work strands.
- Tactical teams had been set up across the Council during the response phase in order to solve issues that arose. It has been an important resource and it was intended to support people with this skill set so that they could continue to provide this leadership resource to the Council. It was recognised that it was not

all senior management that would be doing all the work, and that this level of change activity requires leadership at every level.

- It was recognised that the business support schemes had not assisted everyone, but the Council had influenced how the schemes changed and developed to support more sectors. The Council would be looking at its own procurement and how to use it to restart the economy. It may also be possible to secure more housing development funding to support housing development.

Mr Coutts commented that it was important not to underestimate the challenges, and the efforts of staff, in moving forward. The values that the Council had agreed on encouraged flair, innovation, and a 'can do' attitude amongst staff, and there was confidence that this would continue in moving ahead. The COVID-19 pandemic had created a lot of new vulnerable people, and moving forward would be a collective effort. He went on to move that the recommendations in the report be approved, and Mr G Smith seconded.

It was commented that it was important to present a united front when seeking support from the Government, and it was important that this was not politicised in order to secure the best outcome for Shetland.

(The meeting adjourned at 11.30am due to a fire alarm at the Town Hall, and reconvened at 11.40am)

Mr Fraser advised that he intended to present a notice of motion to the Council in future regarding recognising the efforts of staff over the last few months in a tangible manner. He was of the view that it was appropriate to acknowledge and thank staff, and there was a risk of a detrimental effect if someone was missed out if generic thanks were issued.

It was noted that the Integration Joint Board Chair had written personally to staff to thank them for their efforts. This had been well-received and had illustrated that a personal thank you was valued.

Members paid tribute to officers and staff - led by the Chief Executive - for the exceptional work that had been carried out over the last few months, and also to other agencies involved in supporting this. It was pointed out that it was the role of Members - as community leaders - to ensure that this work was recognised. It was also the role of Members to ensure that Shetland received the support it required through the recovery phase, and to ensure that local authorities had the ability to make decisions for the benefit of people that lived in their areas, rather than have decisions thrust upon them. It was suggested that it would be useful to have localised powers to implement a local lockdown in future.

It was noted that some areas of Shetland had experienced connectivity issues and that the broadband service was very poor, so resolving this issue was more essential than ever. The Scottish Government had already committed to doing so.

It was commented that there would now be an opportunity to build services back better than they had been before, so it was important not to lose this opportunity. Community partners would all have a role to play in the next phase, which would require a partnership approach to deliver all aspirations. It was important to maximise all opportunities and ensure that the Council got the resources required for doing so. For example, the new college could capitalise on what would be required

in terms of training and education, and recent behavioural changes relating to active travel should be taken advantage of.

The impact on the private sector locally was noted with the hospitality sector, in particular, requiring assistance, especially over the winter months. Developments in the energy sector would help generate employment in future, but there would be unemployment difficulties in the short-term. The community would be looking to the Council for assistance, so there would require to be a community impact assessment to address the short-term need.

Decision:

The Council:

- NOTED the updates provided on the Council's COVID-19 response phase and planning for Recovery and Renewal
- APPROVED the Recovery and Renewal Framework as the way in which the Council will structure its recovery and renewal work going forward.

(Mr Thomson declared an interest in the following item as a family member was one of the signatories, and advised that he would take no part in the discussion)

39/20 Petition

The Council considered a petition submitted on 24 June 2020 by 26 signatories entitled "Covid-19: Coordination/assignment for consideration by SIC of the development of a business model, including input by all relevant public bodies, together with private business enterprises, to address the need to reduce Covid-19 testing turnaround time to 24hours in the Shetland Islands".

The Chief Executive advised that the Council's constitution stated that the Council's response to petitions should either be to note them or request a report, and she was taking the opportunity to give Members advice using her delegated authority. She advised that the Scottish Government had a 'test and protect' strategy in place, and the Council's role was to support those who needed to isolate or were vulnerable. The testing aspect was within the remit of the NHS, not the Council. The petition sought Council support for the development of a business case to fund the means to enable a 24 hour turnaround time for testing in Shetland. She was aware - from meetings with the Scottish Government - that mobile units were being developed and tested so that they could be deployed anywhere to deal with 'hotspots', and the results of tests would be available in 25-30 minutes. There was a danger to the Council in pursuing a business case when it was not at the heart of the 'test and protect' strategy. It may result in a lack of co-ordination with the many agencies involved and could result in a worse service than was available elsewhere. There may also be issues with information-sharing, data loss and less ability to track and trace, and this had been an issue in terms of the private sector test arrangements in place on the mainland. These issues highlighted the danger of developing a localised strategy that was not part of an overall NHS strategy.

She advised that she would strongly encourage Members to recognise the responsibility of the NHS, and remit this petition to them. The Scottish Government was ensuring that its 'test and protect' strategy would work, and the Council's role was to identify when it was not meeting requirements and to feed that in through the resilience partnership. She clarified that anyone with symptoms could get tested, and locally this would be dealt with without delay. If Members were minded to ask for a report for staff to prepare a business case, there may be an issue in terms of resources, as it would involve staff already working on economic support schemes and the business cases for the Islands Deal. She therefore recommended that the petition was referred to the NHS.

Mr Coutts moved that the Council note the petition, and remit it to NHS Shetland for consideration.

Mr G Smith seconded.

Some discussion took place regarding provision for testing contractors coming into Shetland. It was noted that it was for the employers to develop business resilience plans for testing, and that they may choose to test their staff. While there were expectations in the community in terms of resilience, the Council did not have that authority to require testing in this particular case. It was appropriate that NHS Shetland was the primary body to take this forward, and this may need to be explained to the wider community. It was suggested that there was a need to get permission from the petitioners to pass the petition on to NHS Shetland, and that NHS Shetland should be expected to fulfil its obligations on the test and protect strategy to the people of Shetland.

Decision:

The Council agreed to note the petition and, with the consent of the petitioners, to remit it to NHS Shetland for consideration.

(Mr Flaws declared an interest in the following item, and left the meeting)

40/20 **Shetland Islands Council's Local Phasing Delivery Plan**

The Council considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-12-20-F) seeking approval of the Children's Services' Local Phasing Delivery Plan for publication and the revised school calendar dates for 2020-2021.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, outlining the background for local authorities being required to produce a Local Phasing Delivery Plan. This followed the Deputy First Minister's statement on 21 May 2020 announcing that schools across Scotland would reopen for pupils on 11 August 2020, and that local authorities should prepare for a new model of blended learning to be implemented. On 23 June 2020, the Deputy First Minister had issued a further statement that all pupils could return to school full-time on 11 August, conditional on ongoing scientific and health advice. The Council's plan had been submitted to HMIE and feedback was expected in the next few days, and more guidance and direction would be issued by the Scottish Government by 30 July. Officers and staff were very aware that the blended learning model before Members today may not need to be implemented, and that it was currently a contingency plan following the latest instruction from the Scottish Government.

She went on to say that the announcement that schools would open on 11 August necessitated a revision to the school calendar locally. It was intended that it would be a 'soft start' in order to recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing and easing pupils back in to the school routine, and plans for this would be communicated to parents. Children's Services, Head Teachers and school staff had worked hard to ensure that pupils continued to receive a high quality learning experience with home learning, and to ensure that everyone was as well-prepared for the return back as possible. Appended to the Plan were the checklists and risk assessments that were in place, and this had been a huge amount of work. It was recognised that the attainment gap may have widened and attainment levels may be affected. Discussions were still ongoing at national level regarding social distancing

and the implications for the islands, which were being taken into account. Social distancing requirements would impact on transport and if it were to remain at two metres, this would mean a huge reduction in the number of pupils buses could carry.

The Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive then responded to questions, and Members noted the following:

- The latest advice was that people showing any sign of symptoms should get tested, and this would apply to staff too. The health and scientific advice was regularly changing, and would be updated as appropriate.
- The guidance regarding mass gatherings was very clear, and it would apply to some school dining areas. Consideration was being given to delivering packed lunches or hot meals to classrooms, and also to reducing the lunch period so that there was less opportunity for pupils to leave school. These areas would be kept under review.
- The Scottish Government would be issuing its next guidance on 30 July – 11 days before schools were due to go back. It was expected that there would be further changes over the next three to four weeks. Updated information would be supplied to Members and parents as soon as it was possible to do so.
- Consultation had taken place with the teaching unions and some parent councils, and it had been felt that it would be best to add an additional week on to next year's summer break to take account of the early start for the next term. The holiday on the last Wednesday in January was a designated Council public holiday and if there was pressure to amend this, it was something that could be brought back before Members.
- Staff would be returning to schools for in-service training on 10 August, and pupils on 11 August. This was the preferred model in most local authorities.
- There had been no particular discussions regarding adding hours to the school week to make up for time that had been lost. There had been discussions around the blended model and how to maximise resources as far as possible to assist with learning at home. The Scottish Government was exploring having newly qualified teachers supporting local authorities with the return to school, and money had been allocated for that.
- It was recognised that parents, pupils and staff may be apprehensive about returning to school, and a group had been looking at mental health and wellbeing for pupils and staff. A presentation had been produced, and it was hoped to share this with Members. Staff were very aware of the nurturing approach, and this was at the centre of the return to schools. It was also one of the reasons that a soft start was proposed.
- Transport was a major issue that was being discussed at national level. Social distancing and face mask requirements applied to both school buses and public buses used for school transport. School bus contracts – scheduled to start on 17 August – would have to be brought forward to 11 August, and discussions were taking place with bus contractors. Social distancing requirements may change but, at the moment, family groups could travel together. It was likely that social distancing requirements in relation to children would change, but the

requirements in relation to adults may not. There were still lots of questions that required to be answered, and the Scottish Government had been informed that Children's Services had a number of questions in relation to transport. Members would be updated on any further discussions.

(The meeting adjourned at 12.50pm, and reconvened at 2pm)

Present (Main Hall):

D Anderson	M Bell
P Campbell	S Coutts
A Duncan	J Fraser
A Hawick	C Hughson
S Leask	M Lyall
E Macdonald	R McGregor
A Manson	D Sandison
I Scott	C Smith
G Smith	T Smith
R Thomson	

Apologies:

A Cooper	A Priest
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In Attendance (Officers) (Main Hall):

M Sandison, Chief Executive

In Attendance (Officers) (by remote link):

H Budge, Director of Children's Services
C Ferguson, Director of Corporate Services
N Grant, Director of Development Services
D Bell, Executive Manager – Human Resources
T Coutts, Acting Executive Manager – Economic Development
J Manson, Executive Manager – Finance Services
P Peterson, Executive Manager – Executive Services
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
R Sinclair, Executive Manager – Assets, Commissioning and Procurement
A Cogle, Team Leader – Administration
K Johnston, Team Leader - Legal
B Kerr, Communications Officer
L Geddes, Committee Officer

The Convener advised that he would be amending the order of the agenda items in order that all the exempt items would be considered at the end of the meeting.

The Council resumed discussion on the following agenda item:

40/20 **Shetland Islands Council's Local Phasing Delivery Plan**

In moving that the recommendations in the report be approved, Mr G Smith, Chair – Education and Families Committee, paid tribute to staff for their work during the challenging period over the last few months, and to the Director of Children's Services for the leadership she had shown in that time since the decision had been taken locally to close schools on 16 March. Staff had been willing and flexible in their approaches, and there had been valuable input from other staff across the Council. He also paid tribute to the Chief Executive for her support to himself and the management team, and in ensuring that everyone had the information they

required in order to make decisions. The decision locally to close schools a week earlier on 16 March, in his view, had made a significant difference to the progression of the virus. Childcare hubs – viewed nationally as sector-leading - had also been set up for key workers and vulnerable families, and the private childcare sector had also gone beyond what had been expected of it. Digital connectivity had proved to be a hindrance in some areas, and staff had provided paper learning packs to deal with this. But the Council should continue to push on digital connectivity in order that it did not end up in situations like this in the future.

He went on to say that local authorities had been required to submit plans for blended learning, and the amount of work that had gone into preparing the Plan before Members today should not be underestimated. It took cognisance of providing the best educational experience for pupils, recognising the parameters that were in place, and the safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils was at the heart of it. However on 23 June, the Deputy First Minister had announced that blended learning was no longer the preferred position. This announcement had been made without prior consultation with local authorities, trade unions, and other partners. Local authorities had been charged with the safe delivery of education, and everyone was in agreement they wanted pupils back in schools when it was safe to do so and the safety of staff and pupils would not be put at risk. The Scottish Government would be making its next announcement on 30 July, so this did not leave a lot of time and there were still a lot of unanswered questions. There would be changes in relation to social distancing, and this would also have an impact on transport, so there was a lot of uncertainty. He was pleased to hear it was proposed to have a 'soft start' in order to help with the transition back to school.

He concluded by commending the Plan to Members, albeit that it was now a contingency plan. It was important that education should resume, but without sacrificing safety. He requested that Members received the presentation on approaches to mental health and wellbeing, if staff had time to deliver this.

Mr Sandison seconded.

During the discussion that followed, Members commended staff for the work that had gone into preparing the Plan and in delivering online learning, and also commended the Chair – Education and Families Committee for his work. The work done early on in relation to free school meals and the creation of childcare hubs had also been exemplary. Members commented that they looked forward to pupils and staff being able to go back to school in a safe and controlled manner without further delay, and it was recognised that there would be instances of stress and anxiety which may impact on absenteeism. It was suggested that it may not be appropriate to try and keep pupils in schools at lunchtimes, and this should be a last resort.

Decision:

The Council:

- APPROVED the Children's Services' Local Phasing Delivery Plan for publication.
- APPROVED revised school calendar dates for 2020-2021.

(Mr Flaws returned to the meeting)

41/20 **Islands Deal**

The Council considered a report by the Director – Development Services (DV-12-20-F) providing an update to Members on the work to develop an Islands Growth Deal, and seeking endorsement for the next steps in the programme.

The Director – Development Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Council continued to work with Orkney Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to put forward a case for a joint Islands Growth Deal. There were a number of island-specific projects - outlined in paragraph 4.3 of the report - that had been developed with partner organisations locally. There was also interest in scoping a number of joint island programmes. Funding was linked to matched funding and justification was based on economic impact and links to national strategies. The projects would be well-supported by other sources of funding. The 700 jobs it was hoped to create in Shetland did not include those that were linked to the Energy Hub. The three Councils continued to engage with the UK and Scottish Governments with the aim of securing a quantum announcement, which would be hugely important in terms of economic stimulus.

Responding to questions, he advised that discussions were still ongoing regarding the quantum announcement, but he was optimistic that the funding sought would be received. This would be in the region of £100 million across the three islands.

In commenting that that there was a need to keep engaging with the UK Government in respect of the quantum announcement, Mr Coutts moved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

Mr Leask seconded.

Decision:

The Council:

- NOTED the progress that is being made on securing an Islands Growth Deal.
- DELEGATED authority to the Chief Executive, or her nominee, in consultation with the undernoted Members, to continue to engage with Scottish Government and UK Government to secure an Islands Deal quantum announcement and agree formal Heads of Terms:
 - Political Leader
 - Depute Leader
 - Convener
 - Chair of Development Committee
 - Chair of Education and Families Committee
 - Chair of Environment and Transport Committee

(Mr Sandison declared an interest in the following item due to his NAFC role, and left the meeting)

42/20 **Shetland Islands Regional Marine Plan – Maintenance and Development**

The Council considered a report by the Acting Executive Manager – Economic Development (DV-08-20-F) proposing that funding of £44,214.38 be approved for the commission of NAFC Marine Centre to provide ongoing development and maintenance of the Shetland Islands Regional Marine Plan (SIRMP) in the financial year 2020/21.

The Acting Executive Manager – Economic Development summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Scottish Government had first issued the direction to produce Regional Marine Plans in 2015. Development and maintenance of the SIRMP was undertaken by the NAFC Marine Centre, fulfilling the legal requirements under the National Marine Plan. He went on to outline the key benefits of the SIRMP and the activities undertaken by the NAFC Marine Centre in developing it. The SIRMP aligned with the objectives set out in the Local Development Plan’s policy for Coastal Development, and provided an overarching policy framework to guide marine development and activity. It was widely acknowledged as an international exemplar for the future of marine management.

Ms Manson commented on the exemplary nature of the SIRMP, and moved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

Mr Thomson seconded.

Decision:

The Council RESOLVED to:

- APPROVE the commission of NAFC Marine Centre to undertake ongoing maintenance and development of the Shetland Islands Regional Marine Plan in 2020/21, at a total cost of £44,214.38.

(The meeting adjourned at 2.45pm, and reconvened at 2.50pm)

Present (Main Hall):

M Bell	S Coutts
J Fraser	A Hawick
C Hughson	S Leask
M Lyall	E Macdonald
R McGregor	A Manson
D Sandison	I Scott
C Smith	G Smith
R Thomson	

Present (by remote link):

D Anderson	P Campbell
A Duncan	S Flaws
T Smith	

Apologies:

A Cooper	A Priest
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In Attendance (Officers) (Main Hall):

M Sandison, Chief Executive

In Attendance (Officers) (by remote link):

H Budge, Director of Children’s Services
C Ferguson, Director of Corporate Services
N Grant, Director of Development Services

D Bell, Executive Manager – Human Resources
T Coutts, Acting Executive Manager – Economic Development
J Manson, Executive Manager – Finance Services
P Peterson, Executive Manager – Executive Services
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
A Cogle, Team Leader – Administration
K Johnston, Team Leader - Legal
B Kerr, Communications Officer
L Malcolmson, Committee Officer

Chairperson

Mr Bell, Convener of the Council, presided.

Mr Bell advised that the confidential items from the morning session, namely agenda items 5 “Support for Inshore Fisheries Management – Shetland Islands Regulated Fishery (Scotland) Order 2020/21”, and 6 “Chief Social Work Officer and Children’s Social Work Management Structure” would be taken at the end of the agenda and reordered so that item 6 is taken before item 5.

43/20 **Infrastructure Directorate Performance Report 2019/20**

The Council considered a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services (ISD-09-20-F) that summarised the activity and performance of the Infrastructure Directorate for 2019/20, enabling Members to analyse performance against its key objectives and responsibilities and against Corporate Plan and Shetland Partnership Plan outcomes

The Director of Infrastructure Services introduced the report, and highlighted the awards gained by the Fleet Management Service and the Scalloway Harbour. He advised on the continuing challenges and the significant matter of the future of Sullom Voe Terminal. In referring to COVID-19, he thanked staff for continuing with services such as gritting, refuse collection, ferry services, Sullom Voe port operations and fishing ports, which are all key to Shetland’s economy and to ensuring accessibility that otherwise would not be done.

During questions the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that the delays in progressing the Cullivoe Road project were due to the survey required that could not be carried out during lockdown. He said that the Asset Commissioning and Procurement Service would provide a strategic outline case to the next meeting on 22 July 2020.

In terms of the Fair Isle Ferry Replacement, the Director of Infrastructure Services explained that the overall discussion with the Scottish Government had still not concluded in regard to fair funding. He said that fair funding was critical to the resolution of the whole ferry fund and that progress could not be made until the Scottish Government had moved to the next stage of the process.

The Director of Infrastructure Services responded to a question in regard to the Gas Plant and there being no throughput income due to low gas prices. He explained that there needed to be a trigger price of 40p/therm but gas was currently trading around 20p/therm. He said that American gas prices were lower than anticipated and this situation was outwith Officer’s control.

In responding to a question on a new opening date for the Scalloway Fish Market, the Director of Infrastructure Services advised that work would be complete by end

July/start of August. He said that Officers were looking at what safe arrangements could be made, but that he was in contact with the new Lerwick Fish Market to collaborate on the opening date and to make the most of the promotional opportunities that coordinated openings and the Scalloway Fish Market award would provide.

During debate, the Chair of Environment and Transport Committee expressed his thanks to staff who had worked throughout the last few months and to those who worked outwith their normal roles. He said that the Council would look at the effects of lockdown on operations and more than ever the fair funding for ferry services was essential and critical to the ongoing provision of ferry services. He said that politically the case was being made through the Leader and the Chief Executive, but the Council needed a conclusion to this matter from the Scottish Government.

Decision:

The Council NOTED the:

- plans and progress in 2019/20 and
- proposals for 2020/21 activity and priorities

44/20

Development Directorate Performance Report 2019/20

The Council considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV-07-20-F) that summarised the activity and performance of the Development Directorate for 2019/20, enabling Members to analyse its performance against the Directorate's Service objectives and the Corporate Plan outcomes.

The Director of Development Services introduced the report and highlighted the key priorities. He referred to 4 particular achievements set out in section 4, namely house building, bus network review, college merger and islands with small populations. The Director of Development Services said that all four areas had good communication with communities. He also referred to the Risks and Service Challenges and advised that these areas were being addressed. In terms of financial outturn overspend in the directorate he explained that the Scottish Funding Council had now confirmed that it would not be covering the operational costs prior to the merger. Some of this overspend had been helped by assistance from other service areas. The Director of Development Services paid tribute to the Acting Executive Manager – Economic Development and the business gateway team for their work on the hardship scheme. He said that the Scottish Government has worked extremely well with staff and the Leader in ensuring that the money was distributed to community organisations. The Director of Development Services said that going forward the outcomes from the Shetland Partnership Plan was still valid and the department's priority is to reset as part of the recover and renewal plan over the next weeks and months.

In responding to a question around the additional cost in regard to the college merger, the Chief Executive said that a lot of resources had been put into this project and the Ministerial Merger Business Case was now with the Scottish Government for consultation and approval. She said that the project was moving forward and

Officers had been disappointed with the additional cost that had been expected to be part of the transition funding provided by the Scottish Funding Council.

The Chief Executive was asked about the Council's future in terms of the recovery, the effects of COVID-19 and return of resources. The Chief Executive advised that housing building, for example, there was a commitment by the Scottish Government for delivery through the Strategic Housing Improvement Project. She said that Shetland would coordinate its focus where funds have been secured to meet the desire for 1000 properties and perhaps more, as the world continues to change. She said that in this instance the funding from the Scottish Government was external money rather than Shetland having to actively secure it.

During debate, the Vice-Chair of Development Committee complemented the Director of Development Services on the extensive report and the work of the many Officers for their hard work and dedication and how they have dealt with their workload during COVID-19. He added that it was clear to see the tangible way in which the business gateway had handled the payments to businesses during this time.

Assurance was provided by the Chair of the College Board that the college merger process was proceeding well in the hands of the Principal, Shetland College and the Director of Corporate Services. He said that the project team had complied with the timescales set and it now had no control over the next stage. He said that he was confident that a merged position would be reached and a single entity would be created for further education in Shetland.

During further debate, appreciation was expressed to staff for the way in which grant assistance was provided to the Community Halls. Reference was made to the Internal Air Services and a previous decision taken to keep the Tingwall airport open, in light of the recent closure of Scatsta Airport, which had resulted in job losses.

Decision:

The Council discussed the contents of this report and made relevant comments on the achievements of the Directorate during 2019/20, progress against the priorities set out in the Directorate Plan (2019/22) and contribution to forward plans.

45/20

Children's Services Directorate Performance Report - Quarter 4, Period to 31 March 2020

The Council considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-11-20-F) that summarised the activity and performance of Children's Services Directorate for the fourth quarter of 2019/20, the three months up to March 2020.

The Director of Children's Services introduced the report, and highlighted the Directorate Achievements set out in section 4.4 and noted that in regard to progress on the expansion of early learning and childcare, the capital works had not been able to continue during lockdown. She said that the impact of COVID-19 meant that there was a large increase in the use of cleaning materials, free school meals had been paid out during Easter, school trips planned for Italy had been refunded, with no trips planned next year. Going forward the Director of Children's Services advised that Officers would work on the priorities set out in Appendix A.

In responding to questions, the Director of Children's Services confirmed that there had been a delay on the residential facility for looked after children, but confirmed that only one young person had been facilitated off island, with others having been moved back home or moved on through after care. She said the young person cared for off island had maintained connectivity through a variety of means. The Director of Children's Services added that vulnerable children in care homes have found it difficult and there have been circumstances where extra support has been put in place using existing dedicated staff and additional accommodation where necessary. The Director of Children's Services advised that it was still hoped that the residential facility would be complete by the end of the year and she would keep contact with contractors to ensure that the facility is ready as soon as possible.

Reference was made to the outturn position in paragraph 4.1 and to the work of the schools service achievements at 4.4 and it was suggested that those areas working together was making a difference for the children and young people. It was suggested that there was equal value given to each area in a collective and flexible fashion.

Decision:

The Council discussed the contents of this report and made relevant comments on progress against priorities to inform further activity and the planning process for the remainder of this year and the next.

46/20

Corporate and Executive Services – End of Year Performance Report 2019/20

The Council considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services (CRP-12-20-F) that summarised the activity and performance of Corporate and Executive Services for 2019/2020, enabling Members to analyse the performance against the objectives set out in the current relevant plans, and in the Council's Corporate Plan.

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the report, and advised that Officers were set to review all activities and reframe them in terms of lessons learned and sustainability themes. She said that in the short term the key would be to support children returning to school and the return of services. The Director of Corporate Services commented that there would be an increase in activity for Audit to account for what had been done so far. She commented on the work of the Emergency Planning Service and the need for additional staff resources to support the one dedicated member of staff. The Director of Corporate Services provided an overview of the work undertaken during lockdown and the continuation of group meetings at a local level with the Chief Executive. She said that in terms of financial performance there were a number of elements to consider including the accommodation portfolio and the need to look at the key themes of recovery going forward, and it would be important to look at accommodation with the NHS and other partners where possible.

During questions, comment was made in regard to the ICT upgrades and the significant savings to be made by reducing travel and using video participation. The Director of Corporate Services said that in terms of maintaining equipment to a standard through the use of a rolling upgrade programme would be challenging given the advance of digital technology, which also comes at a cost. She said however the key to using technology is connectivity and that can be a limiting factor. The Director of Corporate Services said that although connectivity was an issue in Shetland there was a commitment to upgrade equipment on a rolling programme.

Following further comment around the savings that could be made by remote participation at meetings, and the example given of a successful connection to a recent meeting of CoSLA, the Chief Executive agreed that there had been an opportunity to do more work remotely. She said that this had always been available to Members but was not normally set up by CoSLA. She cautioned however that working remotely works well when everyone does it, and that choices would be made as meeting return to normal, around whether there was more value in being present for face to face contact, than dialling in.

In responding to a question on the partnership work with Edinburgh College to provide a Professional Development Award in Childhood Practice, the Director of Children's Services confirmed that Shetland College had been approached but they were unable to provide the course at that time. As this course was needed for the "1140" scheme to be ready in time, a contract was made with Edinburgh College. It was agreed that the Director of Children's Services would provide Members with the length of that contract.

Given the savings through staff vacancies and the recent job losses as a result of the closure of Scatsta Airport and the hotel sector, the Director of Corporate Services was asked if Officers would return to the recruitment strategy, and how that would affect the budget in the long term. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the vacancies reported were last year and were in hard to fill posts such as in Legal Services, but Legal Services was now up to full staff complement. She said that any vacancies and not automatically filled but are assessed in terms of whether there remains a need for that post in the context of future plans. The Director of Corporate Services explained that vacancies provide the opportunity to see how that work can be done differently. She advised that the vacancy factor presented as a saving had now been removed.

During debate, the Leader thanked the Director of Corporate Services for the report and commented on some of the activities and priorities given to some areas. He commented in regard to COVID-19, and what was seen as a can do attitude from staff with a need to focus on that going forward. The Depute Leader added her thanks for the staff at ICT for facilitating those who can work from home.

During further debate, concern was expressed in regard to the continuation of home working and that it should not become the default. It was suggested that it may create difficulty for some in achieving a good work/life balance and that the social element of face to face contact should not be underplayed.

Further comments were made around the benefits of using technology for meetings, in terms of savings and convenience. It was however suggested that attendees need to be on a level playing field and the importance of attending in person should not be underestimated.

A final comment was made in regard to the availability of remote meetings to the public and that there needed to be a solution for broadcasting to the public rather than being reliant on media reports.

Decision:

The Council:

- DISCUSSED the contents of this report;
- COMMENTED on the achievements of Corporate and Executive Services during 2019/2020;
- COMMENTED on the anticipated Risks and Services challenges of Corporate and Executive Services; and
- ADVISED managers of their views.

47/20 **Corporate Risk Register**

The Council considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services (CRP-13-20-F) that presented the current Corporate Risk Register, and highlighted recent changes and current relevant information.

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the report, and in responding to a question from the Vice-Convenor she advised that she would provide an explanation on the increase in PIN forms, following the meeting.

Decision:

The Council:

- CONSIDERED the content of this report and of the Corporate Risk Register attached as Appendix 1;
- ADVISED the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team of their views; and
- ENDORSED the actions being taken by management to mitigate the risks described in Appendix 1.

In order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, Mr Bell moved, Mr Coutts seconded, and the Council RESOLVED to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of the following item of business.

(The Press left the meeting).

There followed a short comfort break and the meeting resumed at 4pm.

(Ms Manson left the meeting)

48/20 **Confidential Corporate Risk Register**

The Council considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services that presented the current Confidential Corporate Risk Register which complements the Corporate Risk Register report, as presented earlier in the agenda.

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the report, highlighted the significant risks and responded to Member's questions.

Members noted the recommendations contained in the report.

Decision:

The Council:

- CONSIDERED the content of this report and of the Confidential Corporate Risk Register attached as Appendix 1; and
- ADVISED the Director of Corporate Services of their views on each of the risks currently included in the Confidential Corporate Risk Register.

49/20

Chief Social Work Officer and Children's Social Work Management Structure

The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services which proposed that changes are made to the management structure of Children's Social Work services.

The Director of Children's Services introduced the report.

There being no questions the meeting moved into debate, and following comments Mr G Smith moved that the Council approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr T Smith seconded.

Decision:

The Council CONSIDERED and RESOLVED to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

(Mrs Macdonald and Mr Sandison left the meeting)

50/20

Support for Inshore Fisheries Management – Shetland Islands Regulated Fishery (Scotland) Order 2020/21

The Council considered a report by the Acting Executive Manager – Economic Development.

The Acting Executive Manager – Economic Development introduced the report and he and the Director of Development Services responded to questions.

Following lengthy discussion and debate, Mr Leask moved that the Council approve the recommendations contained in the report. Mr C Smith seconded.

Decision:

The Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the recommendations contained in the report.

The meeting concluded at 5.10pm.

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Chair